

August 16, 2007

Representative Jerry Petrowski
Chair, Committee on Transportation
Room 11 North, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Chairman Petrowski and the Committee on Transportation:

I deeply regret that a previous commitment keeps me from testifying before you in person. On behalf of Commander Bill Hustad and the nearly 60,000 members and auxiliary members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) located in Posts from Superior to Pleasant Prairie and from Dickeyville to Ellison Bay, I wish to thank you for scheduling a hearing on Assembly Bill 370 relating to commercial driving license testing for military license holders.

This bill had its genesis when I talked to members of the 1157th and 1158th Transportation Companies of the Wisconsin National Guard. These soldiers had returned from Iraq after driving vehicles on some of the most hazardous roads in the world and could not qualify for testing to get a Commercial Drivers License (CDL) to drive on the relatively peaceful roads of Wisconsin. They are required to get further drivers education before they can be tested.

After contacting the Governor's office and Secretary Busalacchi of DOT for some magical solution that would enable these soldiers' to get their CDL's, I was informed that the only way to accomplish this goal was legislatively. Secretary Busalacchi was in favor of the idea and referred me to Representative Bob Turner to implement the legislation. Representative Turner in turn introduced AB 370 and for that I wish to thank him and his staff for assisting those who have served our nation.

To put it in the simplest of terms, this bill would require DOT to waive the knowledge and driving skills tests for CDL applicants who hold a federal military CDL, regardless of where it was issued, with endorsements authorizing operation of commercial motor vehicles.

The military training to obtain a CDL is formal, rigorous and requires successful completion prior to authorization to drive each type of vehicle ranging from the smallest Humvee to the largest tank transport carrier. The experience level of these military drivers is of the highest caliber. These young men and women have proved themselves on roads both here and abroad.

Current state law already authorizes the waiver of CDL knowledge and road tests from another state or jurisdiction. This bill would merely extend that waiver to those who have obtained their driving experience while serving in the Armed Forces.

This bill would go a long way in easing the transition from being a driver in a military setting to being a civilian, tax-paying driver in the state of Wisconsin.

I wish to once again thank Representative Turner for introducing this bill and Representative Petrowski for holding this hearing. I respectfully request a favorable vote from the members of this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to write in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Michael L "Gunner" Furgal
State Legislative Chairman
Veterans of Foreign Wars
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Jim Doyle, Governor
John A. Scocos, Secretary

STATE OF WISCONSIN, DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

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April 18, 2007

Representative Bob Turner
Wisconsin State Assembly
Room 212 North, State Capitol
Madison, WI 53708

Dear Representative Turner:

On behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and the nearly half-million veterans we serve, thank you for authoring LRB 1656, regarding Commercial Driver's Licenses for former Members of the Armed Services.

Currently, many military service members undergo formal military training to learn to operate many types of military vehicles. Military service members are then authorized on military driver's license to drive each type of vehicle on which they have successfully completed training. These types of vehicles range from Humvees and tanks to 2-1/2 and 5-ton trucks, transport carriers, and many others.

The training is formal, rigorous, and requires successful completion prior to authorization to operate each type of vehicle.

Your legislation would provide an extra boost to transitioning military service members, who would have the ability to receive a Wisconsin Commercial Driver's License (CDL) for the corresponding commercial vehicles on which the service members were trained while in service.

This CDL waiver is not unique. Current state law already authorizes the waiver of CDL-related knowledge and road tests for individuals with a CDL from another state or jurisdiction.

Even if this waiver proposed under your bill were unique, it would be an important measure to aid service members in transitioning to civilian employment in Wisconsin.

Thank you for the foresight to see the need for, and for introducing this important legislation. Your enduring, demonstrated commitment to honoring and assisting those who served our nation in uniform in its times of need is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Scocos", is written over a horizontal line.

JOHN A. SCOCOS
Secretary

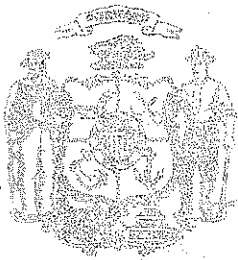
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION HEARING 16 AUGUST 2007.

Good morning Chair Petrowski, Vice Chair Bies, members of the Committee on Transportation, I am Larry Olson the Executive Assistant at the Department of Military Affairs. With me today is Maj Dave Dziobkowski a member of our legal staff.

We are here today in support of AB 370 which will assist a military service member who has been licensed to operate military vehicles in obtaining a Wisconsin Commercial Drivers License. AB 370 would allow this transition to civilian employment in Wisconsin by treating the service member the same as an application of a commercial drivers license holder from another jurisdiction which is current law.

Just in the Wisconsin Army National Guard, we have approx. 772 HMMWV's and over 800 military vehicles which are larger in size than a military HMMWV. There are at least one licensed operator for all of these vehicles.

We look forward to work with the State Department of Transportation, Representative Turner and Senator Erpenbach and this committee to refine and enhance the bill as required. We are here to answer any questions you may have. Thank you for your time and commitment to our Wisconsin service members and families.



Robert Turner

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
TO THE 61ST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on AB 370 CDL Testing for Military License Holders

Assembly Committee on Transportation. 417 N (GAR Hall)

Thursday, August 16, 2007

Representative Jerry Petrowski (Chair)
Representative Al Ott
Representative Mark Gottlieb
Representative Brett Davis
Representative Amy Sue Vruwink
Representative Gary Sherman

Representative Garey Bies (Vice-Chair)
Representative Eugene Hahn
Representative Karl Van Roy
Representative John Steinbrink
Representative Mike Sheridan
Representative Phil Garthwaite

Chairman Petrowski and members:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today in favor of
Assembly Bill 370 relating to commercial driver license testing for
military license holders.

Assembly Bill 370 was introduced at the request of Michael
Furgal, the State Legislative Chair and Past State Commander of the
Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). This bill will make it easier for
Wisconsin veterans to transition to civilian life, and will help our
veterans and reservists find good jobs.



Current state law allows the Department of Transportation (DOT) to waive certain commercial driver license (CDL) testing for applicants holding a CDL from another jurisdiction and for applicants holding a military license, *only if the license was issued in Wisconsin.*

This legislation would require the DOT to treat a military CDL holder's application the same as the application of a CDL holder from another jurisdiction, *regardless of where the military license was issued.*

The applicant would be allowed a waiver only for specific vehicles and endorsements previously authorized by his or her military license. DOT waivers would not include hazardous materials ("H") or school bus ("S") licensing. The military license holder would still be required to take an eye exam.

AB 370 will offer more job opportunities for Wisconsin veterans and servicemen and women. This bill will also provide consistency in the handling of CDL applications of those individuals with military licenses and the applicants with CDL licenses from other jurisdictions.

Thank you.